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PART I—Section I

प्राधिकार से प्रकाशित

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इस भाग में भिन्न पृष्ठ संख्या दी जाती है जिससे कि यह अलग संकलन के रूप में रखा जा सके ।

Separate paging is given to this Part in order that it may be filed as a separate compilation.

PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 13th January 1966

No. 2-Pres./66.—The sudden demise at Tashkent of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri in the early hours of Tuesday, the 11th January, 1966, has plunged the nation into deep distress and grief. Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri went to Tashkent in the cause of peace and it is a great tragedy that just when his persistent efforts towards a settlement for an honourable and enduring peace in this sub-continent achieved fruition, fate delivered a cruel blow and removed him from our midst.

Born in 1904, at Mughalsarai in Uttar Pradesh, Lal Bahadur Shastri lost his father while he was still an infant. How this infant,

born in a modest environment, rose to the highest political office in this country, is an inspiring saga of noble endeavour, unwavering sincerity of purpose, and a high sense of patriotism and integrity in public life.

Lal Bahadur Shastri was only 17 years old when the call came from Mahatma Gandhi and without hesitation he plunged himself in the freedom struggle. He was soon imprisoned. On release he entered the Kashi Vidyapeeth at Varanasi and came under the influence of the savant, Dr. Bhagwan Das. He took the Shastri degree from the Vidyapeeth and re-entered active politics.

At the age of 23, Lal Bahadur Shastri was married to Shrimati Lalita Devi, who has always stood by him as a steadfast companion to the very end of his life of sacrifice and devotion to the Nation.

Lal Bahadur Shastri had participated in all the mass movements launched during India's fight for freedom and was imprisoned as many as seven times. In 1946, he was elected to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly and was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Chief Minister. Subsequently, he was appointed Minister of Police and Transport. This portfolio he held for nearly five years.

In 1952, when the first general elections were held in India after the attainment of independence, Lal Bahadur Shastri was entrusted by the Congress party with the task of organising the election campaign; the great success which the party secured at the polls in these elections was in no small measure due to his organising capacity.

Lal Bahadur Shastri became a member of the Rajya Sabha in the first session of Parliament. He was appointed Union Minister for Transport and Railways in 1952. Four years later, he resigned his ministership, because he felt he was constitutionally responsible for a railway accident in which many lives had been lost. This was symbolic of his staunch faith in and sincere endeavour to live up to the highest traditions of parliamentary democracy. Expressing his deep appreciation of this step in Parliament, the late Prime Minister Nehru described Lal Bahadur Shastri as a man of the highest integrity with devotion to high ideals.

The call to assume the responsibility of a high public office came to Lal Bahadur Shastri again in 1957, when he was elected to the Lok Sabha and was assigned the portfolio of Transport and Communications in the Union Cabinet. In March 1958, he became Minister for Commerce and Industry. Later, on the death of Shri Gobind Ballabh Pant, in April 1961, the important portfolio of Home Affairs was entrusted to him.

As Minister for Home Affairs, Lal Bahadur Shastri brought into play his gifts as an able administrator, and he handled a number of complex and intricate political and administrative problems with

sagacity and skill. He had great capacity for resolving differences and brought to bear on disputes and discords the healing touch of his great personal charm, gentle persuasion and deep understanding. One of the difficult problems which he solved soon after his assumption of the office of Home Minister was the language issue in Assam. Amongst the important matters which received his special attention during his tenure as Home Minister was the promotion of emotional integration amongst the people of India, a matter which always remained uppermost in his mind.

In August 1963, Lal Bahadur Shastri resigned from the office of Home Minister, to devote himself to the task of the re-vitalisation of the Congress organisation. Soon after, he was called upon to join the Union Cabinet as Minister without Portfolio. In that capacity he lightened the burden of the heavy responsibilities of the late Prime Minister and on the passing away of Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru the mantle of that great leader fell on Lal Bahadur Shastri.

The smoothness with which the change-over took place was the measure of the nation's confidence in Lal Bahadur Shastri's capacity to direct the affairs of the country. And the nation was soon to find that its trust in him was fully justified. The onerous responsibilities of his high office unfolded his great qualities of leadership. In terms of time, the tenure of Lal Bahadur Shastri was a short one. However, during the span of nineteen months that Lal Bahadur Shastri was Prime Minister the country passed through a period of such severe stress and strain as would test the mettle of the highest leadership. During a crucial phase of our history, bristling with serious internal as well as external problems, he guided the destinies of the nation with strength, determination, wisdom and far-sighted statesmanship. A man of genuine humbleness of spirit and of unfailing courtesy, Lal Bahadur Shastri was essentially a man of peace. He sought peace in the country, peace with her neighbours, and peace throughout the world. His concept of peace, however, was one of peace with honour, and behind his modesty and soft exterior lay firmness of purpose and a resolute will. When, therefore, the challenge came a few months ago, it found Lal Bahadur Shastri a firm sentinel of the country's honour, freedom and territorial integrity. In this hour of crisis, he provided the nation with a determined and inspiring leadership under which the entire nation rose as one man to meet effectively the threat of aggression. These hostilities, which were not of India's seeking, however, did not deflect Lal Bahadur Shastri from his quest for peace and good neighbourliness; the Tashkent agreement was his finest hour and a measure of his sincere effort in the direction of peace.

Lal Bahadur Shastri was a man of the people. Both as an individual and as a leader, he endeared himself to the people. His life was one of complete dedication to the service of the nation. Even in frail health, he did not permit himself rest or respite. His tragic end, which came in the wake of his vigorous pursuit of the

Tashkent talks, in complete disregard of mental and physical strain, was characteristic of his devotion to the service of the country and to the cause of peace.

The country has lost Lal Bahadur Shastri when it had great need for his services and the people had discovered in true measure his great qualities of character and leadership. It is for the people of this country to prove worthy of the legacy which Lal Bahadur Shastri has left behind and to strive whole-heartedly and unitedly for the fulfilment of the great tasks to which he addressed himself and for which he lived and died.

On the eve of his death he said to the Defence Minister, "We have now to fight for peace with the same courage and determination as we fought against aggression". The nation can never forget these words which sum up his message to India and to the world.

Y. D. GUNDEVIA, Secy.